



Arlington Bicycle Advisory Committee

Date: June 21, 2023.

Time: 7:15 PM

Location: Via Zoom Conference.

Minutes

Attendees:

- Executive Committee: Christopher Tonkin. (Chair), Adam MacNeill., Linda Epstein., Muris Kobaslija., Jack Johnson., Scott Smith (TAC liaison).
- Town of Arlington: John Alessi (Senior Transportation Planner).
- Members of the Public: Martin LaMonica., Doug Greenfield., Vincent Baudoin., Steve Revilak., Gillian Sinnot.

1. Greetings and introductions, ground rules for online meetings.

Christopher Tonkin advises that the meeting is held remotely related to extension of COVID-19 measures adopted during the State of Emergency. Tonkin notifies attendees that Scott Smith is taking minutes; the meeting is being recorded for the purposes of verifying the minutes; and the recording will be deleted after the minutes are approved. Tonkin confirms the committee members and others in attendance for the meeting.

2. Approval of outstanding meeting from previous meetings.

Committee Secretary Doug Mayo-Wells is unable to attend tonight's meeting, so no previous minutes to approve.

3. Report from COBWEB Officer.

No COBWEB (Cops on Bikes with Education for Bicyclists) officer present.

4. Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Report.

Scott Smith reported that Toole Design has been contracted to update the bike matrix. New Bluebikes stations are coming this summer: one near Arlington High School and one at the Minuteman bikeway and Mill Street. In a

written report to TAC last week, DPW reported that sidewalk work is underway, including a bumpout on Warren Street. No mention of the Alewife Bridge.

In response to a question about Town Day (September 23, 10:30 AM - 4:30 PM), **ABAC voted to use ABAC funds for a booth, and to invite TAC to share in staffing. Proposed by Chris Tonkin, seconded by Adam MacNeill, carried unanimously.**

Action item: Scott to write to TAC about Town Day.

5. Allocation of ABAC funds.

John Alessi noted that Claire Ricker (Director of Planning) informed him that funds can be carried over to the next fiscal year. Our desire is to spend most of the funds on a bike education event aimed at middle school students at Gibbs. Jack Johnson noted that the backup plan will be informational signage on the Minuteman Bikeway.

6. Bike Parking.

Adam MacNeill noted that Butternut bakery customers were asking about bike parking. Do we have a townwide plan? John Alessi added that the Town Manager had asked about Arlington Heights locations. Regarding bike parking near Butternut (located on the north side of Mass Ave just west of Mill Street), several committee members noted that sidewalk space is tight at that location. Perhaps the businesses could request use of some on-street space for a corral (one car parking space would fit many bikes). Given that removal of on-street car parking spaces can be contentious, the Town Manager and Select Board would probably be more open to such a request from the abutting businesses.

Regarding parking in Arlington Heights, Christopher Tonkin and Jack Johnson will check out possible locations along Mass Ave between Davis St and Paul Revere Road. The parking would most likely be standard inverted U racks parallel to the curb.

7. Broadway Neighbors Coalition.

Vince Baudoin introduced the Broadway Neighbors Coalition, an initiative that was started in April and now has ~75 people involved, primarily East Arlington residents including several Town Meeting members. They are working with Everywhere Arlington Livable Streets (EALS). The issues they are concerned about break down into two categories:

- Fast cut-through traffic on side sides, creating an unsafe pedestrian environment.

- Improving the Broadway and Warren street corridors, particularly for pedestrian and bicycle accommodation.

During the past few weeks, they organized two site visits, one focused on a side street (Oxford) and one on Broadway. Laura Swan, chair of TAC, was able to attend the Broadway visit. State Representative Sean Garballey also attended one of the meetings.

He shared an annotated map of issues marked up by residents. Issues included:

- Alewife Brook greenway crossing of Broadway near Route 16.
- Lack of marked crosswalks between Route 16 and Cleveland Street.
- Warren / Broadway intersection.
- Need for improved bike accommodation (separated bike lanes) along Broadway and Warren.

Scott Smith noted that Somerville is studying the Route 16 / Broadway intersection. John Alessi has reached out to Brad Rawson (Somerville's transportation planner), who is leading the study, and can report back at a future meeting.

With the upcoming DPW water/sewer work at the east end of Broadway (approach to Route 16), a section where there is limited parking demand, there may be an opportunity to significantly improve bicycle and pedestrian accommodation on the approach to Route 16.

Finally, Vince noted that he is starting to reach out to businesses along Broadway and Warren Streets.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/broadwayneighborscoalition>.

During this discussion, Linda Epstein and Gillian Sinnott arrived.

8. MBTA Communities Zoning

Gillian Sinnott introduced the MBTA Communities Act, which requires some 175 communities in the Boston area, including Arlington, to make zoning changes to permit multi-family housing by right in parts of their communities. She noted that Arlington already has a significant amount of multi-family housing, mostly built before the 1970s.

These changes are at least partially undoing the zoning actions of some 50 years ago, when larger lot sizes were imposed and multi-unit housing restricted. Much of Arlington's housing was built in the 1920s and 30s.

Arlington is required to designate a district of at least 32 acres where multifamily housing will be allowed by right. Multifamily housing means housing 3 or more units, so it could be an apartment block, a Triplex or triple decker, or 2 duplexes side by side.

The district must have a density of at least 15 homes per acre, and a capacity of at least 2,000 homes, and the housing has to be suitable for families, so you cannot put age restrictions on it. Note that although 2-family houses are permitted by right in parts of Arlington, it doesn't count as multi-family under this law.

She noted the opportunities created by this law, in enabling the provision of more affordable housing, so that public service employees (teachers, other Town employees) can afford to live in Town. Also, it provides opportunities for those who wish to downsize, and provides a greater customer base within walking/biking distance of businesses.

There are several carrot and stick incentives. For example if we can comply with these requirements by February 2024, we will become eligible to participate in a clean energy pilot program.

The MBTA working group now has a draft proposal for the district, dated 6/7/2023

<https://www.arlingtonma.gov/Home/Components/News/News/12760/16#!/>

The working group is now seeking community input. A final proposal is planned for September, to be voted on by a Special Town Meeting in October.

Possible actions for Arlington citizens include providing comments to the working group, hosting a community meeting, and joining the mailing list.

9. Senior Transportation Planner Updates.

John Alessi reported that the counter at Swan Place had reported no data for the first part of 2023. In May, 79,000. June: 47,000. Why lower in June? Christopher Tonkin added that we have done some manual counts, both at Swan Place, and at other locations such as Mass Ave (organized by EALS).

Bluebikes usage increased after the on-street stations returned in April. Monthly usage was approximately:

- Jan - Feb: 400
- March: 600
- April: 930
- May: 1800

The town has contracted with Toole Design to update the bike lane design guide. He will have more information after next week's kickoff meeting.

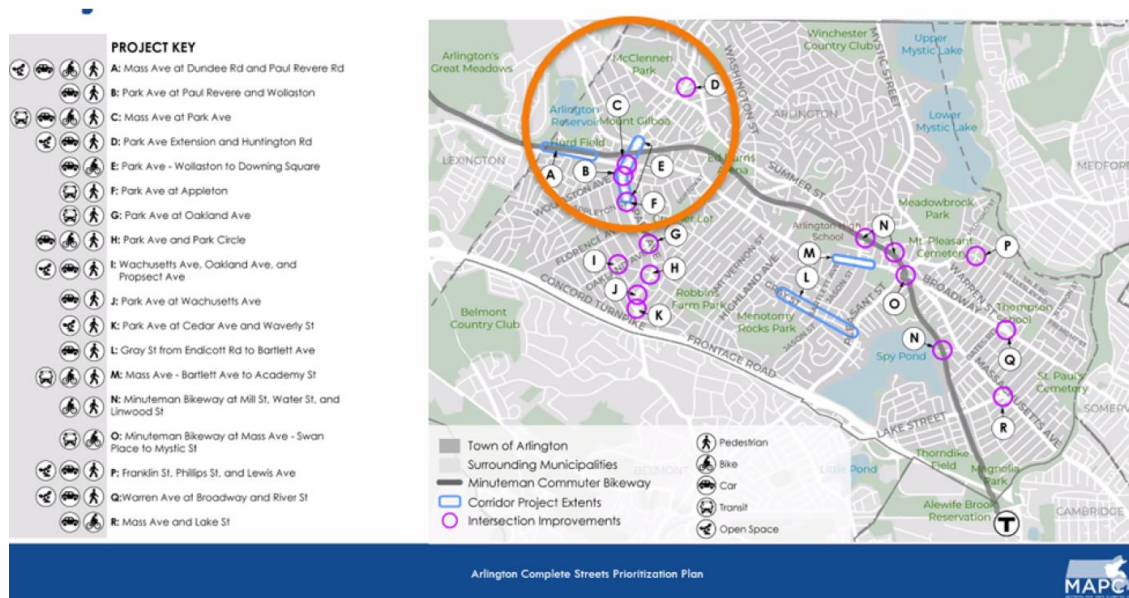
Earlier this month, the Select Board approved extension of the bus/bike lane a short distance into Arlington from Cambridge, to connect with the new bus / bike infrastructure in Cambridge. Eastbound, the AM peak bus/bike lane will be retained, with two parking spaces being kept on the eastbound side.

Internal discussions are going on now about bike lanes on Medford Street. They will involve some parking removal.

With the recently passed safe passing legislation, MassDOT is offering informational signs to municipalities. DPW has committed to installing the signs, aiming for locations along Mass Ave where bike lanes end.

10. Complete Streets Prioritization Plan Update.

John Alessi shared a few slides from the Zoom public meeting that was held last Thursday. He noted that the resident survey garnered some 1200 responses, with top priority areas including Mass Ave and Park Ave. He shared the overall project list, below.



Specific areas mentioned include:

- Broadway/Warren/Bates/River Removing the section of Warren between River and Broadway, to simplify the intersection geometry.
- Mass Ave and Dundee Road and Paul Revere Road (near the Lexington line). Linda noted that parking is tight in that area, and that Paul Revere is already being used to bypass the Park Ave / Mass Ave intersection
- Park Avenue from Wollaston Ave to Downing Square. Chris noted that the grade on Park Avenue could have an effect on the bike lane design.

Next steps include posting the recording and presentation slides, as well as another public survey.

John requests feedback from committee members by ~ July 6. Then, perhaps we can discuss more formal feedback (as a committee) at our July meeting.

jalessi@town.arlington.ma.us

A few screen shots:

Example Changes – Broadway at Bates Rd, River St, Warren St

- Close off Warren St between River St and Broadway
- Expand public open space
- Simplify intersection geometry
- Add curb extensions with new curb ramps and crosswalks
- Add new crosswalks across Broadway at bus stops
- Create clear corners for better visibility

\$ \$2 million

⌚ 3-5 years



Example Changes – Mass. Ave at Dundee Rd and Paul Revere Rd

- Tighten intersections with curb extensions and rain gardens
- Add parking-protected and buffered bike lanes
- Right-size bus stops
- Add Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons (RRFBs) across Mass Ave
- Add crossing to bus stop at Drake Rd



\$ \$480,000

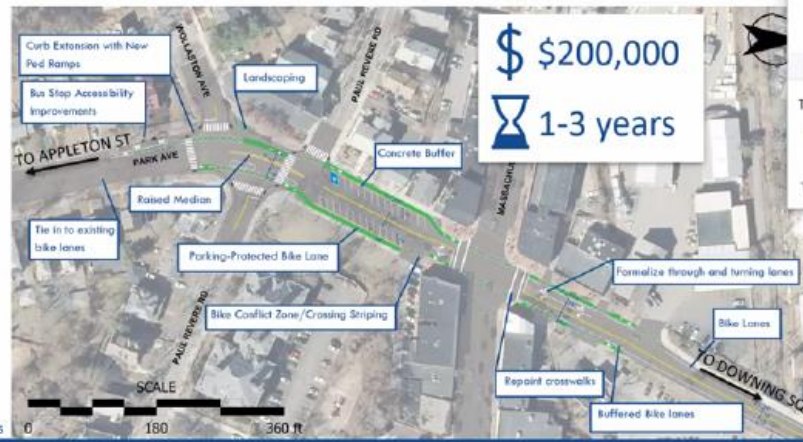
⌚ 2-4 years

All project sketches are preliminary concepts

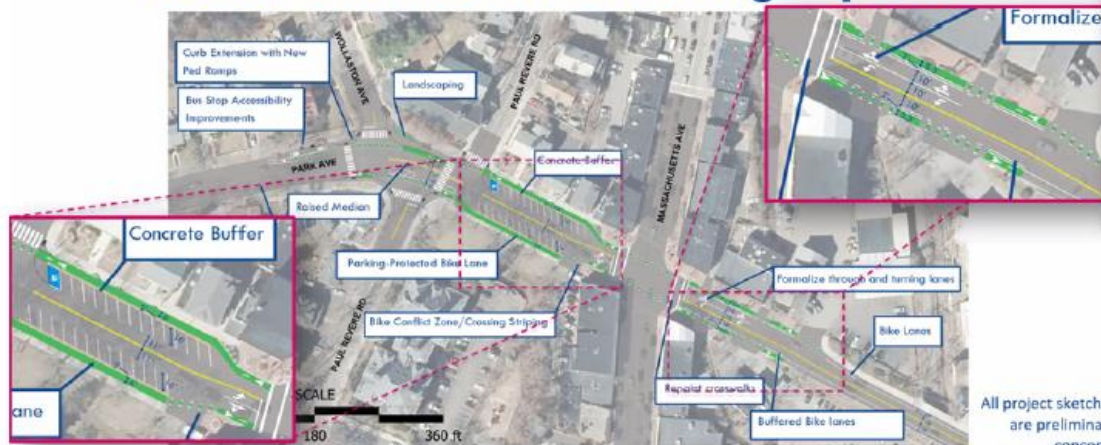
Example Changes – Park Ave from Wollaston Ave to Downing Square

- Tie-in to existing bike lanes from Appleton St to Wollaston Ave
- Add parking-protected bike lanes from Paul Revere Rd to Mass. Ave
- Add bike Lanes from Mass. Ave to Downing Square
- Stripe bike lanes through intersections

All project sketches are preliminary concepts



Example Changes – Park Ave from Wollaston Ave to Downing Square



Example Changes – Park Ave at Paul Revere Rd and Wollaston

- Improve bus stop accessibility
- Add curb extension with landscaping opportunity
- Add hardened centerline for traffic calming
- Simplify intersection by restricting Paul Revere Rd through movement
- Add bike lanes and protected bike lanes



11. Tour of Arlington Debrief.

It was a nice day with good turnout, including a few families with children. Consider another tour in the Fall, when the weather is often nice?

12. Dates for this year's meetings.

Upcoming ABAC meetings: July 19 (in person), John will book the room at Town Hall. August 16 (brief meeting for Town Day planning), September 20 (Chris will be away), October 18, November 15, December 20.

Note that Chris will be away during the week of 9/20. He has the tent and table for Town Day.

13. Any other business.

Chris noted that he heard from staff at Battle Road Bikes that a large part of the Minuteman Bikeway in Lexington will be repaved over the next few years. There was a report of a dooring incident in Arlington a few weeks ago. The Somerville Community Path is now open (Davis to Lechmere)

14. Adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.